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June 15, 2015

Senator Wayne Schmidt, Chair
Senate Commerce Committee
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

BORGESS

Lee Memorial Hospital

Dear Senator Schmidt:

On behalf of Borgess Lee Memorial Hospital, I would like to add our organization to the growing list of supporters of Senate Bill 98 that will provide legal authorization for community colleges in Michigan to award the baccalaureate degree in nursing.

Our community college, Southwestern Michigan College (SMC), is the only institution of higher education in rural Cass County. SMC has a long history of providing highly trained registered nurses. Currently, these registered nurses earn an associate degree at SMC.

Whereas the associate degree has traditionally been the entry level for practice as a registered nurse the tides of healthcare are changing, as noted in the IOM report, soon a baccalaureate degree will be required for many, if not most, registered nursing positions.

I started my nursing career 35 years ago in an Associate Degree Program, that gave me the firm foundation to provide great bedside care, but I found as the world of healthcare changed and became more complex, so did my need to expand my education to the baccalaureate level. The healthcare world requires our nurses to come out of school, with not only the skills and tasks that a nurses preforms, but also the critical thinking and leadership skills provided in a baccalaureate program to better advocate for our patients.

In rural Cass County, it is simply impractical for our residents to leave to attend a state university. Moreover, the cost of university programs – even baccalaureate degree completion programs – is prohibitive for most working nurses.

For these reasons, I urge you to support SB 98 in order to ensure the future supply of nurses for our organization.

Sincerely,



Janice K. Troeger, MSM, MSNc, BSN, CENP
Chief Nurse Officer
Borgess Lee Memorial Hospital
Dowagiac, MI